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Kelly Sopak moving on to coach Carondolet women's basketball

By Jon Kingdon



Kelly Sopak on the side line Photo Gint Federas

After 12 years as the head girls basketball coach at Miramonte, compiling an overall record of 304-46, Kelly Sopak determined that it was time to move on to Carondolet High School. There were numerous factors involved for Sopak, who called it "an extremely difficult decision."

"There's never a perfect time to step away from something because you're always going to leave something on the table," Sopak said. "The timing just seemed right to make the move, and with all of the uncertainty with everything, I'm at the point where I'm ready for a new challenge. It's going to be a big challenge because at this point, they're not the Carondolet of old. They definitely need to have some rebuilding done which is similar to what I walked into at Miramonte when I started there."

Sopak has had other job offers through the years but was always focused on Miramonte throughout the year, putting in an entire summer program, playing games and getting ready for the upcoming season. As with everything, the coronavirus was a major disruption for Sopak's summer program: "This year, it just went dark. I haven't been to the gym since our last game. Being away did make the decision to leave a little bit easier, make it more of a clearer picture for me."

Sopak, who will still be coaching the wide receivers at Miramonte, is not leaving the basketball team in a lurch: "I have reached out to all of my players via email and we are going to meet soon, segmenting everyone into three different groups to make sure that we don't have too many people together at one time. The players are in their strength and conditioning program already so they're well on their way."

Sopak will be taking all of his varsity assistants with him to Carondolet and believes that the Matadors JV coach Vince Workman would be a good candidate to replace him: "The last three years, Vince has done a great job on and off the court. The players like him and in terms of wins and losses, he's accomplished all that."

With so much success, there are some memories that stand out for Sopak: "Coaching Sabrina Ionescu for four years was pretty remarkable. Ironically, a win in 2014 over Carondolet in the NorCal tournament to go to Arco Arena was the best game I was ever associated with." Sopak also singled defeating Pinewood 73-40 to win the NorCal Open title, ("It was surreal to take apart that good of a team") and defeating St. Mary's Stockton 94-79 on the road in 2014, ("This game will stay in my memory bank."), but "I'm just going to miss being in the gym at Miramonte, that's what I will miss the most."

Sopak has received nothing but support from all quarters: "I was surprised, even humbled, by the amount of support from my current and former players and the current and former administrations that have reached out, congratulating me and offering support which was something that I wasn't expecting. I have heard from current and former Carondolet players and parents. It has been very heartwarming on all fronts. Anytime you make a decision like this one, you don't know if it's the right thing to do but to get all of that support, it affirms that I am ready for this challenge."

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